

Remarks

The Office Action dated December 15, 2005 has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendment is submitted in consequence thereof.

Claims 1-18 are now pending in this application, of which claims 1-2, 4-5, 7-9 and 11 have been amended. It is respectfully submitted that the pending claims define allowable subject matter.

The rejection of claims 1-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, is respectfully traversed.

The claims have been amended to overcome the issues noted in the Office Action and are now believed to satisfy § 112, second paragraph. With respect to claim 11 and the assertion in the Office Action insufficient structure is recited and that Applicants should consider “means plus function” as an alternative, Applicants disagree that claim 11 is deficient. It is well established that a patent applicant is free to recite features of an apparatus either structurally or functionally, and while means plus function claims are available to Applicants to claim the present invention, they are not required to express and claim functional attributes of the invention. Considering claim 11 in its entirety, the structure and function recited in claim 11 is believed to be readily understood and that the scope of claim 11 is clear and readily ascertainable to those in the art. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claim 11 does indeed particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention, and that neither additional structure nor means plus functions claims are necessary for patentability of the invention as it is claimed.

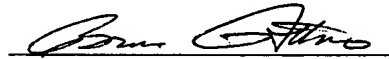
Applicants accordingly request that the rejection to claims 1-18 be withdrawn.

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The indication of allowable subject matter in claims 1-18 is noted with appreciation, and in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



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